

PROPOSAL FOR THE REVIEW OF ARTICLE 62(b) OF THE 1992 CONSTITUTION:
REDUCTION OF THE MINIMUM AGE FOR ELIGIBILITY TO CONTEST THE OFFICE OF
PRESIDENT

Prof. H. Kwasi Prempeh
The Constitutional Review Committee
Accra, Ghana.

11th December, 2025.

Dear Sir,

**Proposal to Amend Article 62(b) of the 1992 Constitution to Reduce the Presidential
Eligibility Age from Forty (40) Years**

1. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the invitation for public input into the ongoing constitutional review process, this memorandum respectfully proposes an amendment to Article 62(b) of the 1992 Constitution to reduce the minimum age for eligibility to contest the office of President of the Republic of Ghana from forty (40) years.

This proposal is founded on principles of fairness, meritocracy, democratic inclusion, historical precedent, and contemporary governance realities, and is consistent with Ghana's constitutional values and evolving socio-political context.

2. STATEMENT OF THE EXISTING CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION

Article 62(b) of the 1992 Constitution provides that a person shall not be qualified for election as President unless that person:

“(b) has attained the age of forty years.”

It is respectfully submitted that this provision no longer reflects present-day realities and warrants reconsideration.

3. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Age Is Not a Determinant of Competence or Wisdom

Age, in itself, is not a reliable or objective measure of leadership capacity, wisdom, or competence. Leadership effectiveness is more appropriately determined by experience, exposure, integrity, commitment, performance and some level of education.

Several leaders, youthful ministers of state, deputy ministers and appointees in successive governments have demonstrated excellence, competence, and strategic leadership in critical sectors of governance in our nation's history. Their performance affirmed that ability, not age, determines effectiveness in public office.

The Constitution already entrusts citizens at eighteen (18) years, not forty (40), with the sovereign power to vote and determine who governs the Republic. It is therefore inconsistent and inequitable to preclude capable citizens—solely on the basis of advanced age—from being eligible to be chosen by the same electorate to lead.

4. HISTORICAL PRECEDENT IN GHANA

Ghana's constitutional and political history affirms the capacity of younger leaders to govern:

4.1 Ghana's first Republican Constitution

The 1960 Constitution set the minimum age to be President at thirty-five (35) years. Article 11(2)(a) of that Constitution clearly stated: "any citizen of Ghana shall be qualified for election as President if he has attained the age of thirty-five years."

4.2 Dr. Kwame Nkrumah

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was thirty-seven (37) years old when he joined the "Big Six" in 1947, leading Ghana's struggle for independence—the most significant and important moment in the nation's history, before becoming the Head of Government Business in 1952 and later the Prime Minister. These milestones confirm that transformational leadership in Ghana has never been advanced age-dependent.

4.3 President Jerry John Rawlings

Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings was thirty-two (32) years old when he first assumed national leadership in 1979 as the Head of State. And again, thirty-four (34) years old at the time of his return to power in 1981 as the Head of State.

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding his rise to power, Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings was formally and officially recognized as the Head of State of Ghana.

4.4 President John Agyekum Kufuor

Former President John Agyekum Kufuor served as Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1969 at the exact age of thirty-one (31) years. In that role, he excellently represented Ghana internationally and participated in high-level diplomatic engagement. Notably, he led Ghana's delegation to the United Nations General Assembly in 1970 at age 32.

If a citizen is trusted at 31 years to represent Ghana globally as a minister, there is no rational constitutional basis to deny such a person eligibility to serve as President, subject to the will of the electorate.

4.5 In the history of Ghana, two (2) citizens assumed the office of Head of State while below the age of forty (40) years. These are: General Akwasi Afrifa, who briefly served as Head of State during the transitional period in 1969 at the age of thirty-eight (38); and Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, in 1972 at the age of thirty-nine (39).

5. CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAN PRACTICE

5.1 Current Administration (2025)

Under the current administration of President John Dramani Mahama, youthful leadership continues to be affirmed:

Dr. Frank Amoakohene, appointed Ashanti Regional Minister, assumed office in 2025 at thirty-four (34) years of age, overseeing one of Ghana's most populous and politically strategic regions. This appointment reflects a deliberate reliance on competence rather than age in high-level governance.

5.2 Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa

During both President John Evans Atta Mills' and Mahama's first tenure (2012–2016):

In 2009, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa was appointed Deputy Minister of Information at age 28, becoming one of the youngest ministers in Ghana's Fourth Republic. He later served as Deputy Minister for Education in 2013 at thirty-three (33) years of age.

His tenure demonstrated that youthful leadership, when grounded in competence and accountability, enhances governance outcomes.

5.3 Council of State Member

In 2025, Mr. Maxwell Boakye made history in Ghana as the youngest member of the Council of State at thirty-two (32) years, representing the Western Region. The Council of State is constitutionally mandated to advise the President on matters of national importance. If a citizen is deemed sufficiently competent and wise to advise the President at such an age, it is reasonable, on grounds of fairness and consistency, that such a citizen should also be eligible—subject to the will of the electorate—to lead the nation.

6. REGIONAL AND GLOBAL TRENDS

There is an established global and regional trend toward youthful leadership:

Africa

1. Captain Ibrahim Traoré – Head of State of Burkina Faso at thirty-four (34) years.
2. Joseph Kabila – President of the Democratic Republic of Congo at twenty-nine (29) years and later won a disputed election at age 35.
3. Mahamat Débhe of Chad assumed office as the transitional president at age thirty-nine (39)
4. Thomas Sankara – President of Burkina Faso at thirty-three (33) years.

Global

1. Emmanuel Macron – President of France at thirty-nine (39) years.
2. Jacinda Ardern served as Prime Minister of New Zealand at thirty-seven (37).
3. Benazir Bhutto became Prime Minister of Pakistan at age 35.
4. Daniel Noboa, President of Ecuador was elected at age 35.
5. Milojko Spajić became Prime Minister of Montenegro at age 36.
6. Jakov Milatović became President of Montenegro at age 36 years old.
7. Sebastian Kurz – Chancellor of Austria at thirty-one (31) years
8. Sanna Marin – Prime Minister of Finland at thirty-four (34) years.

These examples underscore a global consensus that leadership capacity is not old age-bound.

7. EDUCATION, EXPOSURE, EXPERIENCE, AND MODERN REALITIES

Education and experience are acquired much earlier today. Ghana's educational and professional landscape has significantly evolved:

The average age of university graduation in Ghana today is approximately 20–21 years, far earlier than in previous generations. By age thirty-five (35), a citizen typically accumulates fifteen (15) years of professional, civic, or political experience, at the current average age of a graduate.

Within that fifteen years:

- A citizen may serve as almost a four-term Member of Parliament, qualify for leadership positions in a caucus at Parliament, a Ranking Member of a Parliamentary Committee or

even serve as Deputy Speaker, subject to parliamentary procedures, approval and performance.

- An officer with a university degree in the Ghana Armed Forces may rise to ranks such as Major or Lieutenant Colonel, while an officer in the Ghana Police Service may attain ranks such as Superintendent or Chief Superintendent, subject to merit and security agency requirement.
- A legal practitioner may achieve significant standing at the Bar and, subject to constitutional requirements, experience and recommendation, qualify for High Court Judge appointment or become a Justice of the Court of Appeal in Ghana.
- In corporate, or multilateral organizations, such a person may rise to a C-suite position in a reputable, globally renowned, blue-chip and competitive firm.

8. CONSISTENCY WITH INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL STANDARDS

The Ghana National Youth and African Union Youth Charters and relevant United Nations frameworks define youth as persons between eighteen (18) up to thirty-five (35) years. Aligning Ghana's presidential eligibility with this new benchmark of 35 years of age to qualify to be the President of Ghana, promotes fair inclusion and constitutional coherence.

9. THE CASE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Reducing the presidential age limit from 40 to 35 would:

- Promote fairness and equal opportunity
- Strengthen merit-based leadership
- Encourage youth participation and innovation
- Reflect modern educational and professional realities
- Deepen trust between the state and its citizens
- Avert the risk of young citizens feeling permanently locked out of the highest level of leadership in Ghana, which may cause unrest someday and, over time, the danger of an uprising driven by exclusion.

- Reduce any perception that military coup, is the only viable pathway for younger citizens to attain the status of a Head of State, thereby safeguarding constitutional rule and democratic stability.

Safeguards already exist through electoral competition, voter scrutiny, and constitutional checks and balances. Ultimately, the Ghanaian people retain the sovereign power to decide who leads them.

10. RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that Article 62(b) of the 1992 Constitution be amended to read:

“A person shall not be qualified for election as President of the Republic unless that person has attained the age of thirty-five years.”

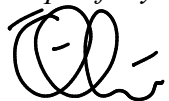
11. CONCLUSION

Revisiting Article 62(b) is not about lowering standards; it is about aligning Ghana’s Constitution with democratic fairness, contemporary realities, and merit-based leadership. If a citizen is deemed capable of voting wisely to elect a President, that citizen—if otherwise qualified, with some degree of life experience, exposure, and tested leadership potential—should equally be eligible to be elected.

At the birth of Ghana’s republican democracy in 1960, thirty-five years was considered sufficient for a citizen to possess the maturity, experience, and judgment required to lead the nation.

Returning to this age threshold would therefore not be a radical departure. It would align realities of life in modern world, current democratic practice with the country’s foundational principles, and reflect the enduring belief that leadership capacity is grounded in competence and merit rather than advanced age.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bright Ofori

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